



Photo by The Associated Press/Srdjan Ilic  
Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Stone, right, Spc. Steven M. Gonzales, center, and Staff Sgt. Andrew A. Ramirez are welcomed by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, back, and the Rev. Joan Campbell, right, upon their release in the Yugoslav military headquarters in Belgrade Sunday. Yugoslav authorities handed over the three captured U.S. soldiers to U.S. civil rights leader Jesse Jackson on Sunday, ending their 32 days in captivity.

# Blacks proud of Jesse Jackson

By PAUL SHEPARD  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The latest chapter in the Rev. Jesse Jackson's public dossier, winning freedom for three American soldiers in Yugoslavia, has touched off a sense of pride among some blacks who wonder if Jackson will ever get his due as more than an advocate for civil rights.

"There's an unspoken sense in this country that big time diplomacy is a white folks game and blacks aren't savvy or worldly enough to play that game," said Roger Wilkins, professor of history at George Mason University. "But here's a black guy who can play in the big game the same way Jackie (Robinson) showed us in 1947."

"Of course black people will feel some pride," Wilkins said. "I mean, can you imagine (national security adviser) Sandy Berger pulling this off?"

Greg Steele, a social worker from Los Angeles, agreed that Jackson's work to secure freedom for the Americans is the cause for celebration.

"I saw some (white) colleagues roll their eyes when we learned Jesse was going," Steele said. "How can they complain now?"

Rep. Cynthia McKinney, D-Ga., issued a statement calling on President Clinton to "congratulate Jesse for a job well done and restrain the NATO bombing," something Jackson has suggested but Clinton rejected.

The success of Jackson's mission has made for strange bedfellows. In a statement issued Sunday, Rep. J.C. Watts, chair of the House Republican Conference, praised the minister for his actions.

"I hope all Americans will join me in recognizing Rev. Jackson for a job well done to free those soldiers where others have failed," he said. "On behalf of these servicemen, their families and my colleagues in Congress, I want to thank you for your hard work on this mission."

Jackson returned from Yugoslavia on Monday and urged Clinton to talk with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and release two Yugoslav prisoners as a goodwill gesture. Jackson met with Clinton to discuss the letter Jackson received from Milosevic last week in Belgrade. Jackson, speaking to reporters after meeting the president, did not reveal the letter's contents.

Jackson gained the three Americans' release Sunday after he met with Milosevic.

Ronald Walters, University of Maryland political scientist, said he was in a hotel room when word of the soldiers' release flashed on CNN.

"All I could say to myself was, 'He's done it again.' I was ecstatic," said Walters, former campaign director for Jackson's 1984 presidential run. "Jesse has been invaluable in lifting that curtain so people can talk. It's a historic role."

While the Jackson resume includes two runs at the presidency and the completion of his fourth trip to a foreign land to retrieve Americans held hostage, it is in the area of civil rights advocacy that Jackson is best known. It's been both a blessing and burden for him.

Jackson bristles when detractors say he should stay within the confines of black affairs in his public advocacy. Walters said he thinks that despite his triumph, Jackson will find it impossible to escape his label as a civil rights leader.

"It's not necessarily fair, but America will continue see him through the prism of race, even when it's obvious his leadership transcends race," Walters said.

It is not the first time Jackson has had to rescue his reputation. He's been called a media hound, an ambulance chaser and a man unwilling to do the heavy work needed for results as a civil rights advocate. But for now, especially within the black community, the criticisms are muted. If the talk among blacks in the streets, on radio and on the Internet is any guide, these are Jackson's days to savor.

"I was so elated. It was God using one of his messengers," said Esther B. Roberts, a retired government worker in a Washington doctor's office. "It was Jackson who put his life on the line."

J. Hugo Warren III, publisher of the Philadelphia New Observer, said Jackson's efforts, while admirable, haven't ignited the surge in race pride set off by an event like boxer Joe Louis' knockout of Max Schmeling in 1938. The knockout win produced joyous pandemonium in black neighborhoods across the country. But Jackson's exploits are still an event for the community to celebrate, he said.

"This can't help but be a positive move for us," said Warren, whose paper has a largely black readership of about 80,000 a week. "It's good for the world to see and better understand the positive role African Americans can play in the world."

## CORRECTION



In last week's paper the wrong captions ran with these two pictures in the story "Returning to Mecca." The top picture is Khalid and Sofiya Griggs on the plain of Ararat.



The picture on the bottom is Khalid Griggs with Jose Ibraimo Abudo, minister of justice for Mozambique.

# Practical approach nets title for local teen

By T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Although she had sashayed across the stage in several unique outfits and presented a slew of information on the African nation of Djibouti, Tosin Durotoye thinks her response in the question and answer portion of the seventh annual Miss Africa/African American Educational Pageant clinched the title for her.

It was not a segment she was looking forward to, she said Tuesday, more than a week after winning the title April 24.

Pageant organizers had given the six contestants a list of possible questions weeks in advance. Most of the questions she thought she could handle, but a few — like the one that asked contestants what three things they would want sealed in a time capsule — left her speechless.

She held her breath and prayed that the question would not be asked and it wasn't. Instead, judges asked Durotoye what she would do for Djibouti, the African nation that was randomly selected for her to represent, if she won a million dollars.

"I said that I thought education is very important, and I would put the money to use in education," she recalled. "Other people might say they'd buy every-one houses, but if everybody is educated, they can do those things themselves and that way they can build themselves up from the floor."

Combine her age of 16 — she was the youngest contestant — and her words of wisdom and perhaps the judges were doubly impressed. She walked away with a victory and a \$500 scholarship from the Liberian Organization of the Piedmont, which sponsors the event. It was the possibility of winning the scholarship that had led Tosin to enter the pageant in the first place.

"I really didn't want to be in a beauty pageant," she said, rolling her eyes at the mere thought. "But they told me it was strictly educational... And I wanted to do something to support something African."

Her ties to Africa are strong. She was born in Nigeria, which is still home to many of her family and friends. She first came to Winston-Salem in 1989 when her father, Yomi Durotoye, accepted a teaching position at Wake Forest University.

The family, which also includes her mother, Adey, and younger siblings Lolly and Tobi, moved back to Africa briefly in 1990 but her father returned to Wake Forest in 1995.

While Tarzan movies and issues of National Geographic have created an image of her homeland that many Americans endorse, she says Africa, in a lot of ways, is similar to America.

"It's not as farfetched as people think," she said, reaching for pictures of family members still in Nigeria. "People say you're from Africa, you must walk around naked or live in huts."

The comments used to make her mad, until she realized some people were speaking purely out of ignorance, without an ounce of malice.

"I learned to distinguish between those two kinds of people: those who really want to know and those who were just picking to make fun," she said.

In the five years she has been here, Durotoye has managed to pick up a lot of American culture. Her accent is unrecognizable and her style of dress is sleek and urban. She also loves hip hop music, which played quietly in the background during the interview.

Durotoye said her parents try to keep African culture and values alive in her and her siblings, but sometimes it is like a tug of war.

"It's really hard because coming from somewhere else, it's just natural to want to blend in," she said.

But Durotoye said there are certain American traits that she doesn't want to emulate. She said she doesn't like the lack of respect that some Americans show to older people, and the lack of ambition and discipline that some teens display.

"Even with the little we had back in Nigeria, you see a lot of kids trying to make it, and you come here and they have all this stuff and they're taking it for granted," she said. Tosin's mother said that a sense of one's own culture is one of the best things parents can give to their children.

"If you don't know where you are coming from you never can tell where you are going," Adey Durotoye said in her beautiful West African accent. "We are so proud of our culture. It's a culture that, if I could, I would teach to every

American who comes my way."

Even before winning the pageant, Tosin said her letters to loved ones back home had become infrequent. Her full plate of extracurricular activities has been keeping her busy. She is vice president of the Art Club at Mount Tabor and a member of the French Club. She is also a movie and music reviewer for the Winston-Salem Journal's Teen Page, a monthly special session.

In some of her most recent reviews, Durotoye has slammed Mary J. Blige's "Live" CD and praised TLC's "Fanmail." An avid artist, she has a scrapbook containing many of the honors she's collected for her work.

"This is a painting of a woman in Djibouti," she said, flipping through some of her work on an easel in her bedroom. She had used the painting during the pageant to show judges how women in the Muslim nation dress.

More of her paintings and drawings, most of which are abstracts, lay in a nearby chair.

On this particular day, she had spent more than eight hours shadowing an adult mentor, Judith Smith of the Reynolda House Museum, as part of a systemwide student leadership program. She has yet to decide which colleges to apply to but her major is pretty much set.

"I want to go into design, advertising design or product design. I don't want to be an artist because you know they starve a lot," she said laughing.

Although Tosin, a soon to be rising senior, has plans to go to school in the United States, she said she hopes that Nigeria will play a role in her future. She said her heart is there, but political instability may make it difficult to return.

"I want to go back. My family is there and there is just no place like home," she said. "But if you think about how you're going to find a job and make money, it's better to stay here."

Tosin said she hopes to travel back and forth between the two countries. Much of Winston-Salem's Nigerian community came out that night to watch Durotoye as she glided through the pageant. When the nerves got



Photo by T. Kevin Walker  
Tosin Durotoye captured the Miss Africa/African American Educational Pageant title recently. The 16-year-old is a junior at Mount Tabor High School

to her, her Nigerian supporters helped her to regain her composure.

"My mom and my whole Nigerian clique were sitting in one corner, so I just focused on them," she said.

With a gigantic replica of the \$500 check that was presented to her at the pageant and her sash in the background, Tosin recalled the moment when they announced her as Miss Africa/African American. She had told herself if she won, she would not indulge in the usual victory drama that accompanies most beauty pageants: agape mouths, hands to chest, tearful bouts of speechlessness. But when her name was called, all of that went out of the window.

"I didn't think I was going to be like that because you watch it on TV and you're like 'oh, that is so fake,'" she said.

Of the six young women in the

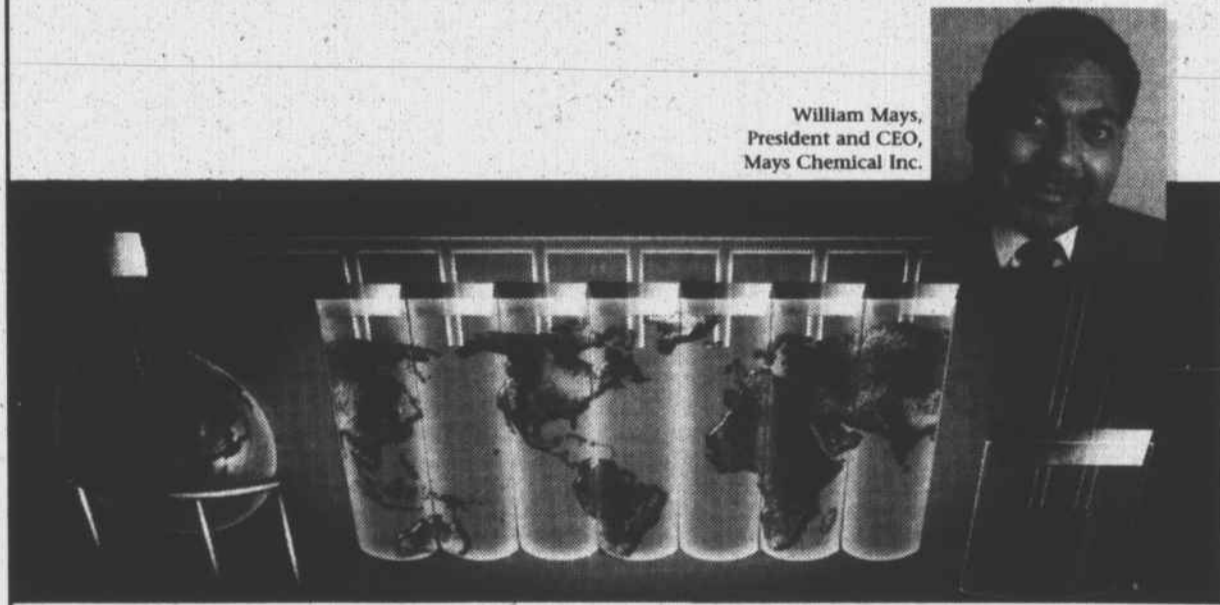
pageant, only two were African. The rest were African American. Tosin applauds those blacks who try to make some type of connection to the motherland. She said the wonders of Africa can only be enriching to African Americans.

"Everyone should be able to trace themselves back somewhere," she said. "You'll find some African Americans who'll say, 'I'm not from Africa. I'm from here,' and that's fine. But some people are looking for more... I think African Americans should be encouraged to go to Africa. After they go, many of them feel a great attachment and they truly know where they are from."

In an article last week about the Liberian Organization of Piedmont's trip to Washington on May 20, the fax number was given instead of the phone number. The organization's telephone number is (336) 724-6933.

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